

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A multilayer ceramic component comprising:  
with a stack of alternating comprising ceramic layers (KS) and electrode layers  
interspersed among the ceramic layers, that serve as the electrode layers containing copper,  
the electrode layers comprising first and second internal electrodes[[],]; and  
wherein the internal electrodes (IE1, IE2) are connected to first and second external  
contacts (AK1, AK2), which are arranged on opposite different external sides of the stack,  
the first and second external contacts containing copper, the first and second external  
contacts being substantially perpendicular to the ceramic layers and electrode layers;  
multilayer structure;  
wherein the first internal electrode is connected to the first external contact and the  
second internal electrode is connected to the second external contact, the first and second  
internal electrodes overlapping each other at a plane intersecting the stack;  
wherein the internal electrodes that are connected to different external contacts are  
in interlocking engagement with one another, wherein the electrode layers contain copper,  
characterized in that the external contacts (AK1, AK2) contain metallic copper,  
wherein in the boundary area that lies areas adjacent to boundaries the boundary  
surface between the first and second external contacts and the ceramic layers, the first and

second external contacts are not oxidized and ~~the material of~~ comprising the ceramic layers is not diminished; and ~~reduced~~,

wherein ~~the~~ a bonding strength of the external contacts ~~on~~ to the stack exceeds 50N.

2. (Currently Amended) The multilayer ceramic component ~~according to~~ of claim 1, ~~in which~~ wherein the first and second external contacts (~~AK1, AK2~~) contain a ~~proportion of~~ ceramic.

3. (Currently Amended) The multilayer ceramic component ~~according to~~ of claim 1 ~~or 2, in which~~ wherein the first and second internal electrodes contain a ~~proportion of~~ ceramic.

4. (Currently Amended) The multilayer ceramic component ~~according to~~ of claim 2 ~~or 3, in which~~ wherein the ceramic ~~proportion is ≤~~ comprises less than or equal to 50 m% of each of the first and second external contacts.

5. (Currently Amended) The multilayer ceramic component ~~according to~~ of claim 4, ~~in which~~ wherein the ceramic ~~proportion lies~~ comprises between 10 m% and 50 m% of each of the first and second external contacts.

6. (Currently Amended) The multilayer ceramic component of claim 2 according to one of claims 2 through 5, in which wherein the ceramic proportion contains comprises ceramic particles having an average grain size of between 0.2  $\mu\text{m}$  and 0.6  $\mu\text{m}$ .

7. (Currently Amended) The multilayer ceramic component of claim 1 according to one of claims 1 through 6, which is produced from comprising ceramic green films that contain a thermohydrolytically degradable binding agent.

8. (Currently Amended) The multilayer ceramic component of claim 1 according to one of claims 1 through 7, in which wherein the ceramic layers comprise a ferroelectric perovskite ceramic of the having a general composition of  $\text{ABO}_3$ .

9. (Currently Amended) The multilayer ceramic component according to of claim 8, in which wherein the perovskite ceramic is of the a PZT type  $\text{Pb}(\text{Zr}_x\text{Ti}_{1-x})\text{O}_3$ ; and  
wherein  $1 \geq x \geq 0$ .

10. (Currently Amended) The multilayer ceramic component of claim 1 according to one of claims 1 through 9, in which the wherein a thickness of the each of the first and second external contacts lies is between 10  $\mu\text{m}$  and 20  $\mu\text{m}$ .

11. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a component according to one of claims 1 through 10, multilayer ceramic component, the multilayer ceramic component

comprising a stack comprising ceramic layers and electrode layers interspersed among the ceramic layers, the electrode layers containing copper, the electrode layers comprising first and second internal electrodes, the method comprising:

applying first and second external contacts to different sides of the stack, the first and second external contacts containing copper, the first and second external contacts being substantially perpendicular to the ceramic layers and electrode layers,

wherein applying comprises debinding and sintering metal paste to form the first and second external contacts;

wherein ~~in which the~~ debinding is ~~conducted~~ performed at a temperature of  $[[\leq]]$  less than or equal to 300° C in a nitrogen stream with ~~the addition of~~ water vapor; ~~and in this manner the debinding process is completed,~~

wherein, at least during ~~the~~ debinding process, ~~the~~ an oxygen partial pressure does not drop below a level of  $p_{min}$ , at which ~~the~~ ceramic contained in the ceramic layers begins ~~will begin~~ to reductively degrade $[[,]]$ ;

wherein the oxygen partial pressure does not exceed a level of  $p_{max}$ , at which ~~the~~ metallic copper will begin to oxidize; ~~at the given temperature~~

wherein the first internal electrode is connected to the first external contact and the second internal electrode is connected to the second external contact, the first and second internal electrodes overlapping each other at a plane intersecting the stack,

wherein in areas adjacent to boundaries between the first and second external contacts and the ceramic layers, the first and second external contacts are not oxidized and material comprising the ceramic layers is not diminished, and

wherein a bonding strength of the external contacts to the stack exceeds 50N;

12. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~of~~ claim 11,

wherein  $p_{\min}$  corresponds to ~~the~~ an equilibrium point for Cu/Cu<sub>2</sub>O[[,]]; and

wherein  $p_{\max}$  corresponds to ~~the~~ an equilibrium point for Pb/PbO or Pb/PbTiO<sub>3</sub>.

13. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~of~~ claim 11 ~~or 12, in which to~~  
~~produce external contacts a~~ wherein the metal paste contains copper-containing metal paste  
~~comprising a copper content of~~ > at greater than 70 m%[[,]]; and

wherein applying comprising using a glass frit flow and an organic binder is used.

14. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~of~~ claim 13, ~~in which an~~  
~~acrylic resin binder is used as~~ wherein the organic binder comprises an acrylic resin binder.

15. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 13 ~~or 14, in which~~  
wherein the glass flow contains ~~essentially~~ PbO and SiO<sub>2</sub>.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein applying further  
comprises firing the ~~according to one of claims 13 through 15, in which the copper-~~  
~~containing metal paste is fired on~~ at a temperature between 700 and 860° C.

17. (Currently Amended) The method according to of claim 16, in which the  
wherein debinding and ~~the firing on of the copper-containing~~ metal paste are performed  
~~on~~ using a copper base layer.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, according to one of claims 13  
~~through 17, in which~~ wherein the ~~copper-containing~~ metal paste is applied ~~by means of~~ via  
a screen printing process.

19. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a multilayer ceramic  
component with alternating ceramic layers and internal electrode layers, comprising:  
~~in which a ceramic mass is used to create~~ producing the ceramic layers using a  
ceramic mass[.,]; and

producing the internal electrode layers using ~~in which~~ a metal paste that contains a  
portion of a chemically active additive; ~~is used to create the internal electrode layers,~~  
wherein the chemically active additive reacts chemically with at least one  
environmental component ~~in its environment~~ other than ~~the~~ a metal portion of the metal  
paste.

20. (Currently Amended) The method according to of claim 19, in which a  
~~chemically active ceramic powder is used as~~ wherein the chemically active additive  
comprises a chemically active ceramic powder.

21. (Currently Amended) ~~The method according to~~ of claim 19 or 20, in which the components of the environment are selected from wherein the at least one environmental component comprises oxygen, at least one component of the ceramic mass, and a binder or solvent that is contained in the metal paste or the ceramic mass.

22. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 19 according to one of claims 19 through 21, in which lead containing~~ wherein the ceramic mass contains lead; and is used,  
wherein as a result of a chemical reaction between the chemically active additive and it's an environment, oxygen is released and/or Pb and/or Cu are bonded.

23. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 19 according to one of claims 19 through 22, in which at least one additive is used as~~ wherein the chemically active additive, selected from the group of comprises at least one of (Zr, Ti)O<sub>2</sub>, MgO and BaO<sub>2</sub>.

24. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 19 according to one of claims 19 through 23, in which a non-precious metal is used as the metal portion of~~ wherein the metal paste contains a non-precious metal.

25. (Currently Amended) ~~The method according to~~ of claim 24, in which Cu or Ni is used as the metal portion of wherein the metal paste contains Cu or Ni.